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SLOVAKIA

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STATEMENT

by

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of the Slovak Republic
to the 13th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development**

HIGH - LEVEL SEGMENT

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Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, the Slovak Republic as one of the new member states of the European Union would like to thank the Chairman, the Secretariat of the CSD and the Bureau for their excellent work. We fully associate ourselves with the statement delivered by the Representative of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union. My delegation wishes to add several brief observations and comments in the national capacity.

In line with the efforts to successfully carry out the Millennium Development Goals, Slovakia *strongly agrees with the Secretary-General of the United Nations Mr. Kofi Annan* and his recent Report entitled "In Larger Freedom: towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All" that *each country has primary responsibility for its own development* - strengthening governance, combating corruption and putting in place policies and investments to drive private-sector-led growth, as well as maximize domestic resources available to fund national development strategies. Also, we very much welcome the right and proper emphasis that the Secretary-General in his report has placed on the three great purposes and pillars of the work of the United Nations, those being Security, Development and Human Rights. My country itself, through its recent experience from the social and economic transformation processes, is a clear example of the fact that major progress in one of the three pillars can only be achieved if substantive steps are taken in the other two as well. Also, of particular relevance, as we ourselves may testify, is the Secretary-General's argument about the crucial importance of the rule of law, which is the necessary prerequisite for sustainable reforms and key advancement in all three pillars.

By adopting effective measures in those areas, Slovakia, has gradually moved from a recipient of development assistance in the early 1990's into the present situation of an emerging donor country now providing its official development assistance to about 14 partner countries in the Balkans, in Asia and in Africa. We have been supporting those countries' institutional capacities, infrastructure, living environment conditions and sharing our own experience from the ongoing economic and social system transformation. In this regard and also *in the context of its candidacy for a non permanent seat in the UN Security Council in 2006-2007*, Slovakia deems its responsibility to continue with such efforts and expand them, where possible and appropriate.

Slovakia strongly supports the outcome of the CSD 12 and considers the CSD 13 a great opportunity to accelerate the implementation of *the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)* and targets on water identified in *the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI)*. Our new way of working can bring about tangible change by solving problems in an integrated way reflecting the 3 pillars of sustainable development.

An important tool for achievement of CSD goals is the *Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM)*, which has to include not only water issues but also vessel into which water is flowing - the whole river basin. IWRM should be implemented throughout agricultural management, forest and landscape management. These requirements of proper IWRM need to develop a comprehensive planning process in the field of river basin management including stepping up efforts to develop national drinking water supply and sanitation strategies.

Although Slovakia has had experience in the field of the river basins water management planning for more than fourteen years, our effort must be focused on new demands that will ensure sustainable development of water resources with respect to *sustainability of ecosystems*. The IWRM at the basin level is at the centre of the implementation process of the Water Framework Directive and the EU Water Initiative.

The IWRM plans and strategies should allow the development of basin managements plans, including *transboundary water resource management*. The territory of Slovakia belongs to the Danube river basin, the largest river basin in Europe. Slovakia is one of 13 countries that are sharing this river basin, and is actively involved in the processes coordinated by the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River and focused on the preparation of the Danube River Basin Management Plan by the year 2009.

Drinking water supply and sanitation should be an important part of IWRM aiming at creating an enabling social and economic environment for the involvement of all actors, public and private, at all levels addressing regulatory and institutional reform, capacity building, technology support and finances to provide access to safe and sustainable sanitation for everyone in urban and rural areas. Although the primary responsibility for providing access to water and sanitation services rests with local and national public authorities, it is essential to involve a broader range of stakeholders.

In Slovakia, the *number of people* living in houses *connected to public sewerage* represents 56% of the total population and the *number of people supplied with water* through public water lines reached 85% -of the total population. Our effort in Slovakia is to ensure appropriate sanitation and drinking water supply. With these aims we are preparing strategies focused on construction of sewerage systems and wastewater treatment plants as well as construction of public drinking water supply systems.

Public Authorities responsible for service delivery should implement appropriate policies at all levels to assure the provision of access to drinking water and sanitation for all and to implement sustainable pricing with appropriate tariff structures that promote responsible use of water resources and that ensure water is affordable.

The actions concerning *inter-linkages and crosscutting issues* are the key to enhance synergies and to manage jointly water, sanitation and human settlements, which is essential to ensure a truly efficient and sustainable result of our efforts. Any isolated action on one theme, even though beneficial, is likely to have only short-term, and less efficient or less sustainable, effects. The cross-sectoral aspects of development are the basis of sustainable development per se. In our view, the implementation of crosscutting issues of the JPOI needs to be addressed as such in the outcome of CSD 13.

Achievement of goals in water, sanitation and ***human settlements*** should be implemented through promoting sustainable settlement structures containing macro-level decisions such as land use master plans and transportation system plans, which will take into account the social, economic and environmental interactions of urban and rural areas.

In order to keep track of progress in meeting the targets and the delivery on the MDGs and JPoI commitments we consider the strengthening of monitoring, reporting and assessment mechanisms at the national, regional and global levels essential for assessing progress, identifying constraints, bottlenecks, emerging issues, opportunities and threats, and for providing policy guidance on appropriate action.

The disastrous flood events of the past ten years have caused numerous human casualties and the material damage reached unprecedented dimensions. The opinion, widespread especially among Europeans well by the 1990s, that such natural disasters were manageable at a reasonable expense, now began to look questionable. More than anything else, the extreme and devastating floods were instrumental in triggering a process of rethinking fundamental attitudes: from dominating nature to coexistence with the floods. The Government of the Slovak Republic approved a report on proposed system precautions for protection against floods and financing the consequences caused by floods - the „*Flood Protection Programme of the SR until the Year 2010*“.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let me express my wishes for a fruitful and constructive discussion during our upcoming sessions.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.